



M E D I A R E L E A S E

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

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CHILD SUPPORT PROGRAM PRAISED BY FEDERAL OFFICIALS *INCREASE IN COLLECTIONS PROOF OF TENNESSEE'S COMMITMENT TO CHILDREN*

NASHVILLE, Tenn.— A report from the Tennessee Department of Human Services to the national Office of Child Support Enforcement garnered praise and congratulations on a job well done. The report covers several areas, including compliance with case closures, establishment of paternity and support orders and enforcement of orders.

The Child Support staff in Tennessee was commended for the exemplary service it provides to clients. In a recent letter from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, officials wrote that the increase in collections is proof that the staff in Tennessee is committed to the support of children.

"We work hard every day to make sure the children of Tennessee receive the support they need and are due," said Human Services Commissioner Virginia Lodge. "We know our staff is dedicated and committed to this goal. It's nice when others recognize this, as well."

Collections for the month of May totaled \$35 million dollars. Human Services' Child Support Division and its child support offices across the state have increased collections so far this state fiscal year by 15 percent over last state fiscal year. From July 2003 through May 2004, more than \$374 million in child support payments were collected. During that same period last year, \$327 million in payments were collected.

Collections have increased steadily for several years. The increase in collections is attributed to enforcement tools, such as administrative wage assignments, liens, license revocation, tax intercept, modification of support orders and passport denials.

The number of child support cases with orders is also on the rise. There are currently 221,000 cases with support orders. The Child Support Division and its partners are working to establish orders for those children without existing orders. Identifying and finding the missing parent and verifying paternity are keys to establishing orders.

For more information on the Child Support Program, visit the Department of Human Services website at: <http://www.state.tn.us/humanserv/child-support.htm>

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